



Banding Summary

May 1-15, 2022

Dear friends and supporters of PIBO,

As we walk through the forest of Fish Point during our morning census, we are surrounded by the beautiful understory of Dutchman's Breeches and Trilliums. The trees are bare and it is easy to get our binoculars fixed on birds moving through the branches. The anticipation for peak spring migration is building as we wait for the arrival of many birds we have not seen since autumn.

May started with a good movement of birds. On May 1st there was an early morning storm that probably caused birds migrating over the lake to stop on the nearest piece of land. This made for a very active census at Fish Point. We observed three species that were the first of the season: Yellow-throated Vireo, Indigo Bunting, and Blue-winged Warbler. Three species were particularly abundant: 58 Ruby-Crowned Kinglets, 135 White-throated Sparrows, and 90 Yellow-rumped Warblers. In addition to the Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets were seen daily in Fox Pond, we also observed a Green Heron and Black-crowned Night-heron.

On May 2nd we banded our first Veery of the season and detected a total of six thrush species during the day. The six species were Veery, Hermit Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin, and my personal favourite: Eastern Bluebird. We enjoyed hearing Rusty Blackbirds singing around the netting area, knowing that soon they will depart to their breeding grounds in the boreal forest. There was a Sedge Wren occupying the brush pile beside the PIBO cottage for a couple of days. We enjoyed watching it and listening to its chattering song.

With rain on May 3rd, we did not do much banding, but we still counted as many birds as we could! There was a reverse migration of 165 warblers (mostly Yellow-rumped Warblers) during the census at the tip of Fish Point and we observed a first of the season Bay-breasted Warbler. The rain stopped in the late afternoon so I decided to take a walk at Fish Point and was thrilled to see a Laughing Gull resting at the tip with Common Terns, Ring-billed Gulls, and Bonaparte's Gulls.

May 4th and 5th were relatively quiet with birds and not many were banded. We did start to see more Yellow-rumped Warblers and Ruby-crowned Kinglets in the nets though. A Yellow-breasted Chat was singing near the banding station. Flocks of Blue Jays were increasing in size daily as they make their short distance migrations.

We did not open nets on May 6th and opened them only briefly on May 7th due to rain and wind. We started to see some larger numbers of birds. Thirty-five Yellow-rumped Warblers and 24 Ruby-crowned Kinglets were observed on the census. We also heard a Pine Siskin flying over and saw two Hooded Warblers.

There was an increase in Yellow Warbler numbers on May 8th and we recaptured two of them that were initially banded in May of 2019 and 2018. That means these Yellow Warblers are at least 5 and 6 years old! With warming temperatures during the late morning, we spotted a Gartersnake and Mourning Cloak butterfly. The Spring Beauties are just beginning to flower, mingling with the yellow and purple violets.

A good migration occurred overnight and on May 9th the weather was clear and calm during monitoring. Yellow Warblers and Indigo Buntings were reverse migrating despite the pleasant weather conditions. Despite many Yellow Warblers reverse migrating, we observed the largest number of this species so far this season (45). Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Indigo Buntings were also more abundant than on previous days. Garter snakes and Green Frogs are now making regular appearances in the netting area, and we also spotted an Eastern Comma butterfly.

Active migration continued into May 10th and many new species for the season were observed. These include Eastern Wood-pewee, "Trail's" Flycatcher, American Redstart, Wilson's Warbler, and Orchard

Oriole. Another reverse migration occurred with hundreds of warblers, orioles, and tanagers migrating. I am completely fascinated by reverse migration! We banded 120 birds, which was by far our busiest day. Magnolia and Chestnut-sided Warblers were the most abundant birds banded, along with a wonderful diversity of other songbirds. A huge flock of 110 Blue Jays was observed flying high over the lake. To finish off an amazing days of birds, Eastern Whip-poor-wills were heard singing in the evening!

With good weather conditions for migration continuing, we were anticipating busy days all week. Although on May 11th there were lower numbers of birds, the species diversity still remained relatively high. We banded just under half the amount as the day before, with Magnolia Warblers still being the most frequently banded bird. We also banded six Northern Waterthrush, which is the most we have banded this season. Ten Red-headed Woodpeckers were reverse migrating from the tip of Fish Point. A Prothonotary Warbler is continuing to sing from the Silver Maple swamp.

The species diversity on May 12th remained relatively high. We banded 54 birds including seven Swainson's Thrush and 10 Magnolia Warblers. Fifteen species of warbler were detected throughout the monitoring.

May 13th was a special day with a special bird visitor. The very first bird we extracted from the nets was a Swainson's Warbler! This southern species has never been recorded before at PIBO. It was immediately apparent that its bill was huge for a warbler. What could make this day more fun? Banding an Acadian Flycatcher. We are always happy to detect the presence of species at risk. Bay-breasted Warblers were definitely the most abundant warbler species this day and we banded 26! This was our second busiest day with 93 birds banded.

On May 13th and 14th we were anticipating busy nets again but they were quiet with only 50 birds banded over the two days. Apparently, southern birds are attracted to our nets because we caught a Kentucky Warbler! A Cerulean Warbler was seen on the census as well as 11 Black-bellied Plovers flying by the tip of Fish Point.

From May 1st to 15th we have banded 455 birds, with 326 of those being banded between May 10th and 13th. A total of 153 species have been observed to date. There has also been an abnormally high amount of White-eyed Vireos this spring. We have banded 6 and observed almost a dozen more.

During this past week, we have been treated to amazing weather and bird migration. Vegetative growth has exploded and the forests are lush and green. Sweet Cicely is flowering abundantly and Appendaged Waterleaf is nearing bloom. A wonderful plum tree is flowering beside the banding station and the Tennessee Warblers are busy eating the insects pollinating the white flowers. We are excited to see what the rest of May has in store!

The summary was written by Evan Sinclair